

Background on the Data Base for
Estimating Casualties

Our casualty estimates result from intensive efforts to exploit the many sources of intelligence data. Since many of these sources provide uneven and sometimes conflicting coverage, we have taken unusual care to countercheck each source against all others. The major components of this data base and its exploitation are as follows:

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Propaganda Claims

We have examined some 38 Vietnamese propaganda claims in 1965 and 1966. Eighteen of 23 claims evaluated in 1965 were done with extensive photo-interpretation. Most of the 15 claims examined in 1966 were analyzed on the basis of DIA post-strike photography estimates

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Photography

We have examined the results of photointerpretation studies and casualty estimates made by DIA analysts for 81 JCS designated targets and 40 targets not on the JCS list. These estimates and the methodologies involved were discussed at length. We have, when possible, subjected each DIA estimate to our holdings [] POW reports and other sources. My best guess is that this procedure has enabled us to refine at least one-third of the DIA studies.

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In addition, CIA in 1965 analyzed through photography 18 of 23 specific North Vietnamese propaganda claims of civilian casualties. CIA also completed in 1965 detailed photographic studies of 10 representative areas -- 7 urban and 3 rural -- in order to obtain factors to be used in developing reasonable methodology for estimating casualties.

DIA review(s) completed.

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Interrogation Reports

Although a large volume of interrogation reports was screened, only 31 provided meaningful information on casualties.

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Remarks: These are [redacted] comments on your casualties paper for Rostow. God knows you have enough to do, but some mathematical computations based on the SAMs known to have been fired in and around major cities (or even just Hanoi-Haiphong) plus some rate-of-fire estimates ought to come up with an impressive fall-out statistics to account for some of the damage in civilian areas.

Suggestion only.

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